A man residing at Tent City 4 in Kirkland was charged Nov. 8 with raping a child in Tacoma before he moved to the homeless encampment at St. John Mary Vianney Catholic Church in October.

Robert Bruce McKay-Erskine, 35, was charged with three counts of first-degree child rape and two counts of first-degree child molestation on Nov. 8 in Pierce County Superior Court.

Tacoma police arrested the man at the Kirkland church on Nov. 7 and his bail was set at \$100,000.

In response to the arrest, church officials sent out a letter to the church community on Nov. 8, notifying people of the incident.

"I want to assure you that the accused, like all residents, was subjected to a thorough background and a sexual-offender check prior to being granted residence at Tent City," said church Pastor Ramon Santa Cruz in the letter, noting the background checks came up clear. The criminal charges were filed on Oct. 26, nearly two weeks after McKay-Erskine became a Tent City resident. Tacoma police responded to the sexual abuse claims on Oct. 11, two days before Tent City moved to Kirkland.

Following the arrest, parish staff met with Tent City staff and have taken steps to implement a system of random weekly sexual-offender checks for residents to "assure the safety and security of our neighbors, parishioners and all who use our parish facilities," said Cruz, adding that the church has hosted Tent City for three-month stays, five times since 2004 without incident. Tent City arrived at the church on Oct. 13 and will be moving on January 12, 2013.

